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Authority on Influence Strategy Effectiveness in the Netherlands and in Germany

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Abstract

This study assesses how authority influences the effectiveness of different persuasive strategies in a negotiation situation comparing the Netherlands and Germany. A total of 97 participants were recruited to fill in an online vignette study about a workplace dilemma - 47 participants from the University of Twente and 50 participants from the University of Bielefeld in Germany. A 2 (authority: low; high) by 2 (culture: the Netherlands; Germany) between subjects design is proposed in order to assess the effectiveness of the different persuasive strategies. Three major findings were made. First, the newly derived persuasive strategies were empirically supported by the results. Second, the results show that the power informational, rights normative and interests normative strategies are perceived as more effective when used by a superior than when used by a colleague. Third, the German participants perceived the power normative, power informational, rights normative and interests normative strategies as especially more effective when used by a superior than when used by a colleague, in comparison to their Dutch counterparts. The Dutch participants perceived these four strategies as more effective when used by a colleague than when they were used by a superior.

Samenvatting

Deze studie onderzoekt hoe autoriteit de effectiviteit van verschillende overtuigingsstrategieën in een onderhandeling beïnvloedt, waarbij Nederland en Duitsland vergeleken worden. In totaal werden 97 deelnemers geworven om een online vignette studie in te vullen over een werkplekdilemma - 47 deelnemers van de Universiteit Twente en 50 deelnemers van de Universiteit Bielefeld in Duitsland. Een 2 (autoriteit: laag; hoog) bij 2 (cultuur: Nederland; Duitsland) between subject design wordt voorgesteld om de effectiviteit van de verschillende overtuigingsstrategieën te onderzoeken. Er werden drie belangrijke bevindingen gedaan. Ten eerste werden de nieuw afgeleide overtuigingsstrategieën van de resultaten empirisch ondersteund. Ten tweede toonden de resultaten aan dat de power informational, rights normative en interests normative strategieën als effectiever worden waargenomen indien deze door een superior in plaats van een collega worden gebruikt. Ten derde nemen de Duitse deelnemers, in vergelijking met hun Nederlandse tegenhangers, de power normative, power informational, rights normative en interests normative strategieën als bijzonder effectief waar indien deze door een superieur in plaats van een collega worden gebruikt. De Nederlandse deelnemers nemen deze vier strategieën als effectiever waar indien deze door een collega in plaats van een superieur worden gebruikt.

Authority on Influence Strategy Effectiveness in the Netherlands and in Germany

Imagine yourself as working in a successful consultancy firm. Your company receives dozens of requests on a daily basis from other firms in need of your company's expertise. It is your task to select and introduce potential new clients who fit the company's requirements. After the selection process, you have to discuss your choice with a colleague. This colleague however does not always share your opinion and you have to negotiate and persuade him or her in order to reach an agreement.

Conflicts and negotiations at work are inevitable (Brett, Goldberg & Ury, 1990). Millions of people are confronted with negotiation situations every day at work (Kim, Pinkley & Fragale, 2005). Many different negotiation and influence strategies are available to resolve a situation like this case mentioned above, while achieving the greatest possible outcome for either one or all of the parties (Nowotny, 2005). Still, situations like the one above cannot be generalized easily and many factors need to be taken into account when searching for an effective strategy. Literature identified several contextual factors which can influence a negotiation. Pruitt and Carnevale (2003) stressed that the relationship between the disputants is influential. Adair, Okumura and Brett (2001) found culture to be a major influence in negotiation situations. Nevertheless, the use of influence strategies within organizations lacks empirical studies (Kipnis, Schmidt & Wilkinson, 1980). Accordingly, many questions that are worth exploring remain unanswered. For example, what are the most effective persuasive strategies? How are these strategies influenced by contextual factors, such as status differences of the disputants and national culture?

The importance of an effective influence strategy for resolving negotiations or disputes at work becomes apparent when discussing the costs of a negotiation or conflict. A negotiation almost always results in transaction costs including the time, money and emotional energy spent on negotiating. Negotiations can have a negative effect on the relationship of the negotiating parties which affect their ability to work together and solve further disputes. Furthermore, disputes that have not been resolved properly have the tendency to resurface and might therefore increase the costs further (Brett et al., 1990). If negotiations or disputes remain unresolved, conflicts can emerge which in turn can lead to lower employee satisfaction, turnover or even physical, psychological and cognitive symptoms of ill-being and therefore harm the entire organization (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008; Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008). As a contribution to organizational conflict resolution

processes, this study tries to answer the questions posed above, and delineates new ways of effectively resolving disputes or conflicts, by combining influence and negotiation strategies and assessing their effectiveness by taking two contextual factors into account, namely authority and culture.

Negotiation strategies and social influence strategies

Ury, Brett and Goldberg (1988) proposed that there are three elements to any dispute, namely interests, rights and power. Accordingly, they delineated three different ways of resolving a dispute - reconciling the interests of the disputing parties (the interests-based approach), determining who is right (the rights-based approach) and determining who is more powerful (the power-based approach).

In reconciling interests according to the interests-based approach, the parties of a dispute firstly disclose and share their interests, such as their needs, desires, concerns and fears. Then, they prioritize them and come up with tradeoffs and concessions in order to satisfy the high-priority interests of both parties often at the cost of low-priority interests of both parties. In this way, both parties experience a satisfying outcome of the dispute.

Solving a dispute according to the rights-based approach is done by determining who is right. The parties rely on standards such as legitimacy and fairness as well as seniority and rights based on social norms, laws and contracts in finding out who is right. In this way the parties determine whose arguments are more correct and thereby come up with an outcome.

A dispute can also be resolved by determining who is more powerful (the power-based approach). Here, the interdependency between the parties of a dispute is important. A person without alternative options in a dispute depends on the other party and is therefore powerless. For the powerless party it is necessary to give in to the demands of the powerful party (see also Brett, et al., 1990; Tinsley, 1998; Tinsley, 2004). These three means of dispute resolution integrate many of the different ways of resolving disputes identified by other literature, for example problem-solving or compromising (Tinsley, 2004).

Another way of reaching an agreement in a dispute can be achieved by influencing the other party until he or she conforms to your propositions. Conformity can be defined as “the tendency of people to change their perceptions, opinions, and behavior in ways that are consistent with group norms” (Brehm, Kassin & Fein, 2005, p. 230). Research has shown that people conform and are persuaded for two very different reasons.

Sherif's experiment in 1936 revealed that people conform in order to behave properly in a specific situation (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008; Brehm, et al., 2005). People want to be correct and legitimate in their judgments and behaviors and therefore adopt the opinion and behavior of another person because they believe that this person is correct and acts in a proper manner. This tendency to judge the information given by others as correct is called informational influence (Bearden, Netemeyer & Teel, 1989; Kaplan & Miller, 1987). For example, in Sherif's experiment, participants had to judge the distance from their standing point to a dot of light in a completely dark room, at first alone and later in groups of three people. In this completely dark room participants had no point of reference to determine whether their judgments were correct or not. Sherif noticed that when a group of participants were to judge the distance from their standing point to the dot of light, after a while the distance estimations of each individual converged to the same estimation. In order to make correct judgments the participants turned to the other members of the group as a reference to determine whether their own judgments were correct. Sherif's experiment shows that participants were influenced by the other members of the group in order to ensure that their judgments were correct.

Asch's famous experiment showed that there is another reason why people conform. People are afraid of the negative consequences associated with socially deviant behavior and want to be accepted, liked and valued by others. In order to fulfill these needs and overcome their fears, people adopt the opinion and behavior of others. This tendency is called normative influence (Brehm, et al., 2005; Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008; Kaplan & Miller, 1987). For example, in Asch's experiment participants had to judge which one of the three comparison lines was equal in length with the standard line. In contrast to Sherif's experiment, the participants could be certain of their judgments because the differences in length were obviously depicted. The participants were sitting in a room with 6 other confederates of the experimenter. After a couple of rounds of judging, in which all participants agreed in their judgments, the confederates started to give obviously incorrect answers. Even though the real participants could see that the confederates gave incorrect answers, many gave in and conformed to the group opinion after a while. Conforming participants later stated that they went along with the opinion of the others even though they were not convinced, but they did not want to deviate from the rest of the group. Participants knowingly gave wrong answer, in order not to be disliked, rejected and ridiculed as it often happens with people who stray from the group norm.

In this study, the three ways of resolving a dispute proposed by Ury, et al. (1988) and the two types of conformity – informational and normative influence – are combined in order to derive new means of solving a dispute, yielding six different types of influence strategies (see Table 1): interests informational, interests normative, rights informational, rights normative, power informational and power normative (see Phouthonephackdy, 2011). The reasons for combining these theories from different disciplines can be found by looking at which parties in a negotiation are emphasized by the theories. The informational and normative influences focus solely on how to influence the target receiving the persuasive messages. The actor who uses and communicates these persuasive messages is not taken into account in these theories. In contrast, the dispute resolution strategies of Ury et al. (1988) also focus on the actor who communicates the persuasive messages. Combining these theories can highlight new opportunities of taking both, the actor and the target of a persuasive message, into account in one approach. These newly derived strategies are believed to be effective because they are based on empirically supported theories of negotiating and because they take account of social norms, which are omnipresent in all circumstances of life and have been found to also influence conflict outcomes (Tinsley & Brett, 2001).

Table 1. *The composition and explanation of the six social influence strategies*

	Interests-based approach	Rights-based approach	Power-based approach
Informational influence	<p>Interests informational approach</p> <p><i>Definition:</i> Arguments deal with the interests of both parties and the legitimacy and correctness of these arguments.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> I hear you are concerned with accuracy, so I went ahead and gathered sales performance data and benchmarks before suggesting these changes.</p>	<p>Rights informational approach</p> <p><i>Definition:</i> Arguments determine who is right according to information, facts and other tangible evidence (such as past experience). This evidence is perceived as logical, reasonable, fair and legitimate.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Company's past experience has shown us that if we make our distributors commit to buying more products, then they will sell more.</p>	<p>Power informational approach</p> <p><i>Definition:</i> Arguments are perceived as persuasive because they focus on expertise, seniority and knowledge in determining who is more powerful.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Based on my 15 years of experience with this type of work, I am sure the changes should be made.</p>
Normative influence	<p>Interests normative approach</p> <p><i>Definition:</i> Arguments assess social norms (company rules or standards) that fit the interests and underlying concerns of the parties.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> I know you must be concerned with the partner's reaction, but the senior management is asking that we increase our partner's initial commitment.</p>	<p>Rights normative approach</p> <p><i>Definition:</i> Arguments determine who is right, fair and legitimate on the basis of the social norms appropriate in the given situation (such as company standards).</p> <p><i>Example:</i> Our company's standard is an initial commitment of at least 200,000. That is the standard set for our business transactions.</p>	<p>Power normative approach</p> <p><i>Definition:</i> Arguments determine who is more powerful on the basis of social norms and therefore use a person's status and position.</p> <p><i>Example:</i> The Senior Vice-Presidents demand the changes be made.</p>

The effect of authority on persuasive strategies

Pruitt and Carnevale (2003) found that the relationship between the disputants in a conflict plays an important role in the conflict resolution process. Two types of relationships can be distinguished, namely equal relationships and unequal relationships (Kabanoff, 1991). In equal relationships, both parties have equal power and neither depends on the other party. Neither party has more authority than the other. However, in unequal relationships one party (powerless) depends on the other party (powerful) who has, as a consequence, more authority. The powerful party has the ability to gain advantage over the powerless party because of the other party's dependency (Adair, Brett, Lempereur, Okumura, Shikhirev, Tinsley & Lytle, 2004; Adair et al., 2001). The essence of the two types of relationships obviously is the difference in power. Power is defined as the likelihood that one party can overcome the resistance of the other party and carry out his or her own will (Kim, et al., 2005).

In a workplace setting, people experience power differences every day. Sometimes they come across coworkers and colleagues who have an equal amount of power and with whom they share an equal status. Other times, they deal with superiors who obviously have a higher level of power than they do and with whom they have an unequal relationship. Power¹ has been found to have an effect on a negotiator's performance and negotiation behavior (Kim et al., 2005; Pruitt & Carnevale, 2003) and therefore it is believed that power or authority will also influence the perceived effectiveness of the six social influence strategies mentioned above.

Johnson, Ford and Kaufman (2000) found that subordinates are more likely to agree with an authorized superior, even if they privately disagree with this superior. Kabanoff (1991) supports this notion by stating that the influence attempts of a powerful party in a negotiation are generally more effective than those of a powerless party. He also delineated that in an equal relationship both parties tend to question each other's contributions to the negotiation, because neither party depends on the other. In addition, equal parties feel free to disagree with the other party. Furthermore, a party with more alternatives has been found to achieve more in negotiations than a party with less alternatives (Wolfe & McGinn, 2005). When this statement is elaborated in combination with the definition of power in Wolfe and

¹ In the current study, power will be termed authority in order to prevent any misunderstandings and confusions regarding the power-based strategies to influencing others.

McGinn's (2005) article, this statement proposes that the powerful party achieves more in negotiations than the powerless party.

According to the literature above, using authority is more effective in unequal relationships than in equal relationships. On this basis, it is believed that the social influence strategies relying on authority and status differences, and socially accepted behavior, are perceived as more effective when used by a superior than when used by a colleague. The strategies relying on authority and status differences are the power informational, power normative, rights normative and interests normative strategies. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated.

Hypothesis 1a: The power normative strategy is more effective when it is used by a superior than when used by a colleague.

Hypothesis 2a: The power informational strategy is more effective when it is used by a superior than when used by a colleague.

Hypothesis 3a: The rights normative strategy is more effective when it is used by a superior than when used by a colleague.

Hypothesis 4a: The interests normative strategy is more effective when it is used by a superior than when used by a colleague.

The moderation effect of culture on persuasive strategies

Not only the relationship between the disputants in a conflict influences the perceived effectiveness of social influence strategies, but also several other factors have been found to have an impact. According to Brett and Okumura (1998, p. 496) culture "provides insight into the different solutions that societies evolve to manage social exchanges such as negotiation". Culture has also been described as a crucially influential factor of a person's negotiation behavior (Adair, et al., 2001) and negotiations between employees with different cultural backgrounds are occurring more frequently (Kumar, 2004). It is here believed that cultural differences could also have an effect on the perceived effectiveness of the six influence strategies.

Triandis (1995, p. 6) described culture as "shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles and values found among speakers of a particular language who live during the same historical period in a specified geographic region". These shared aspects are passed on from generation

to generation. Consequently, he also stated that cultures can be seen as equivalent to their country, thus the borders of a country approximately define a culture. This study takes two different cultures into account, defined by the borders of their countries, namely Germany and the Netherlands. On the first glance, these neighboring countries might not appear to differ strongly. However, cultural differences do exist.

Tomalin (2003) claimed that the Germans perceive clarity, regulations and formality as important in all domains of their lives. For them, it is important to always know what they and everybody else is supposed to do, which is outlined in clear regulations. The German proverb 'Ordnung muss sein' ('order must be') reflects this emphasis on clarity and regulations (Tomalin, 2003). When it comes to the workplace, they also show a strong sense of authority and duty. Respecting the authority and subordinating one's own will to the demands of the greater good is essential to maintain clarity and a stable social order. Germans might complain and criticize authorities but they will also accept them. Accordingly, German companies are described as hierarchical (Tomalin, 2003). In a negotiation, hierarchical cultural values imply a preference for power strategies, because they stress the value of status and power (Adair, et al., 2004). In Addition, people with hierarchical cultural values have been found to defer to others to whom they are inferior (Tinsley & Brett, 2001). Because of the Germans' hierarchical values at work and their focus on regulations and clarity, it is believed that they perceive power-based and normative strategies as more effective than the Dutch, especially in a workplace dispute. It is further believed that the Germans will react more strongly to the presence of an authority figure in this regard. In other words, the Germans judge the power-based and normative influence strategies proposed by an authority figure as more effective than the Dutch.

On the contrary to the Germans, the Dutch society has generally been described as egalitarian (Yang, van de Vliert & Shi, 2007; Buckland, 2008; Harris, Moran & Moran, 2004) where equal rights and positions are valued (Buckland, 2008). They exchanged their sense of authority for a sense of self-reliance (Buckland, 2008). Just as a hierarchical cultural orientation indicates a preference for power-based strategies, an egalitarian cultural orientation implies a dislike for power-based strategies (Adair, et al., 2004). In egalitarian societies, decision making is decentralized and people are perceived as equal (Tinsley & Brett, 2001). In addition, Triandis (1995, 2001) proposed that individualists, such as the Dutch, focus on relational equity in a conflict situation. Moreover, the Dutch believe that everybody should have the right to determine their own way of living and they focus on

fairness and justice in handling their matters (Buckland, 2008). In a negotiation situation, where an authority figure uses persuasive messages that rely on authority, status and socially accepted behavior to be persuasive (like any power-based and normative based strategy does) relational equity and self-determination is not present. The Dutch might perceive their sense of self-reliance, equal rights and relational equity threatened. Accordingly, the values of an egalitarian and individualistic society, such as the Dutch society, seem to provide the opposite of the values implied by the power-based and normative based strategies of influencing others. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Dutch will react negatively to persuasive arguments worded by an authority figure, in comparison to their German counterparts. Accordingly, the following hypotheses are formulated:

Hypothesis 1b: The effect of authority on the perceived effectiveness of the power normative strategy is stronger for the Germans than for the Dutch.

Hypothesis 2b: The effect of authority on the perceived effectiveness of the power informational strategy is stronger for the Germans than for the Dutch.

Hypothesis 3b: The effect of authority on the perceived effectiveness of the rights normative strategy is stronger for the Germans than for the Dutch.

Hypothesis 4b: The effect of authority on the perceived effectiveness of the interests normative strategy is stronger for the Germans than for the Dutch.

In contrast to the four strategies concerning power and norms, the interests informational and the rights informational strategies generally rely on cues to persuasion other than social norms. For example, the interests informational strategy relies on logical and reasonable arguments, whereas the rights informational strategy relies on logic and the underlying needs of the other disputing party. No hypotheses regarding the effect of authority and the moderation effect of culture on these two strategies are formulated.

Methods

Participants

For this study, a 2 (authority: low; high) x 2 (country: Germany; the Netherlands) between subject design is proposed. Data was collected from two different samples (a German and a Dutch sample) and participants of each of these samples filled in one of the

two versions (a low authority version and a high authority version) of an online vignette study.

A total of 50 German participants (*M* age 23.4) filled in the German online vignette study - 24 % of these participants were male and 76 % were female. All of the German participants have the German citizenship and only one of these was born in a country other than Germany and has a different ethnic background. Still, this particular participant has a very strong German cultural identity. Of the German sample, 25 participants took part in the low authority condition of the online vignette study and 25 participants participated in the high authority condition.

In total, 47 Dutch participants, of which 38 % were male and 62 % were female (*M* age 20.5), filled in the Dutch online vignette study. All of the Dutch participants have the Dutch citizenship, were born in the Netherlands and have a Dutch ethnic background. Of these participants, 23 participants took part in the low authority condition and 24 participants participated in the high authority condition.

After filling out the online vignette study, participants of all 4 groups were screened for their nationality, ethnicity and cultural identification to ensure that their cultural background matched the cultural condition they were in. If no match was found, data from these participants were removed. For example, if a participant with a clear German cultural background took part in one of the Dutch cultural conditions, data from this participant was removed in order to prevent nuisance.

Procedure

Initially, 169 respondents (85 German participants and 84 Dutch participants) participated in this study. However, only the data from 97 respondents were usable. A manipulation check was used in order to identify and exclude participants who misunderstood the scenario of their vignette version. Demographic data (such as questions about their cultural orientation) were used to identify those participants with a cultural background unfitting for the purpose of this study. In addition, some participants did not fill in the questionnaire completely and had to be excluded due to incompleteness of data.

Students for the German sample were recruited at the University of Twente in the Netherlands and at the University of Bielefeld in Germany. A flyer in German (see Appendix A) was used to make possible participants aware of the study and to attract them to participate. This flyer was handed out on the Universities' campuses. These participants were

compensated by providing the opportunity of winning two movie theater tickets after participating.

Students for the Dutch sample were recruited at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Dutch participants were able to participate in this study via the SONA system and received one credit as compensation. They also had the opportunity to win two movie theatre tickets after participating. In addition, a flyer in Dutch was handed out on the University of Twente's campus.

Research material in this study was an online vignette study with four different conditions, namely a German low authority condition, a German high authority condition, a Dutch low authority condition and a Dutch high authority condition. The German participants were provided with a German version of the online vignette study and the Dutch participants received a Dutch version of the online vignette study. In both cases, back translation was used to check the quality of the translation and ensure comparability of the different versions (Sin-Wai & Pollard, 2001). An online version of the vignettes was chosen to facilitate the data-collection for both, the researcher and the participants, because by this means the participants were able to fill in the questionnaire whenever and wherever they wanted. The participants were unaware of the fact that different conditions of this study exist. They were given the links available to their cultural condition and were to choose one of the two links (to either a low or high authority condition) themselves.

At the beginning of the online vignette study, participants were informed about what they had to expect from this study to enable them to make a decision whether or not to give their consent to participating. They were also informed that their data would be treated anonymously and confidentially. When participants gave their informed consent to participate, they were asked to provide some demographic information, such as gender, age, country of birth, citizenship, cultural identification and their first language. Then, they were presented a scenario and were asked to imagine themselves in that situation.

The scenario described a situation in which the respondent has to imagine him- or herself to be a part of a high-performance team in the Risk Management department of a prominent company², responsible for preventing risks for the company. The workplace situation in this scenario is described as tense because recently the company had to put up

² The name of the company and its products differ across the German and Dutch versions of the vignette. The German company is called 'Margarete Steiff GmbH' and produces the famous Steiff teddy bears. The Dutch company is called 'De Blauwe Tulp' and produces the famous 'Delfts Blauw' porcelain.

with lawsuits and some employees have been laid off as a consequence. It is made clear to the respondent that he or she cannot effort to lose the job. Next, the tasks of the Risk Management team are described. The respondent has to imagine him- or herself as being responsible for reviewing documents and catching mistakes that might lead to risks for the company. This process also involves a second reviewer who is responsible ensure that everything is in order with the document. It is made clear that the final decision about the content of the document is made by the first reviewer, thus by the respondent and that he or she reaps the rewards if everything goes as planned but that he or she also suffers the consequences if the deal goes wrong. The respondent's current assignment is described as an important opportunity for the company (in terms of profit over the next five years) and also for the respondent him- or herself as it might provide an opportunity for promotion. It took a long way to get this far and the deal with an important future business partner is about to be closed. The dilemma, the respondent has to face in this situation, is that the second reviewer wants to increase the amount of initial commitment that the future business partner has to make. The respondent is informed that the future business partner will be extremely frustrated about these changes and that the possibility exists that the future business partner might not agree to the new deal. The dilemma is enhanced by introducing that the second reviewer is either the respondent's colleague or supervisor (which acts as the manipulation of the independent variable authority). The respondent has to decide whether or not to give in to the wishes of the second reviewer. Both possible outcomes have advantages and disadvantages.

Before the scenario, participants were confronted with a cultural prime to reinforce the participants' cultural identity. After reading the vignette, seven open-ended questions were used as a manipulation check in order to see whether or not the scenario was correctly understood and the manipulations worked. The answers given by the participants to these questions were coded as correct or incorrect.

After the manipulation check, the participants were reminded of the dilemma presented in the scenario and were asked to rate how effective different arguments, predicated by the second reviewer (their colleague or their supervisor), are in persuading them to accept the proposed changes to the deal.

At last, the participants were offered the opportunity to receive a copy of the results and/or to win two movie theatre tickets. They were also thanked for their participation and debriefed about the purpose of the study and the different social influence strategies assessed.

Measures

Authority. Authority is an independent variable in this study and was coded dichotomously, using 1 for low authority and 2 for high authority. This variable was manipulated in the vignette by varying the disputing party's job title. The participants received the vignette version in which they had to rate the effectiveness of the arguments provided by either their superior "the Senior Vice President of Operations" or their "colleague" who has equal authority. The participants unknowingly chose one of the vignette versions.

Culture. Culture is another independent variable and was also dichotomously coded based on a participant's demographics (country of birth, citizenship, ethnic background, etc.); 1 for Germany and 2 for the Netherlands. It was used as a moderator variable. This variable was indirectly reinforced by the cultural primes in the questionnaire which were in line with cultural background of the participants. In total, participants were culturally primed in five different ways. First, a picture depicting typical German or Dutch country sides and artifacts, and the German or Dutch national flag (see Appendix A) was presented before the scenario. To make this cultural prime less conspicuous, the contact details of the company presented in the vignette are included in this picture. Second, the company³ presented in the scenario is a manufacturer of country-specific products. Third, the second reviewer has either a typical Dutch or typical German name and fourth, the headquarters of the company are in a famous Dutch or German city. Fifth, the language of the questionnaire is also used as a cultural prime.

Influence strategies. The dependent measure encompassing the six different social influence types (interests informational (II), interests normative (IN), rights informational (RI), rights normative (RN), power informational (PI) and power normative (PN)) were measured by a series of responses to 24 statement where participants had to rate the effectiveness of these statements on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all effective, 7 = very effective) (Phouthonephackdy, 2011). In order to stress the differences between these types in an inconspicuous way, the different items measuring the same underlying construct were clustered together. Table 2 (see Appendix B) depicts the Cronbach's alpha values for each social influence strategy.

³ In the German version of the vignette a prominent German toy manufacturer, the Margarete Steiff GmbH, is presented and in the Dutch version a fictional manufacturer of the famous 'Delfts Blauw' porcelain is presented.

Results

Structure of the influence strategies

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted regarding the different types of social influence strategies in order to assess whether items intended to measure the same underlying construct actually do so. A varimax rotation revealed a clear six factor solution (see Table 2 in Appendix B). The first factor clearly captures the degree to which participants perceived the power normative strategy as effective with four items (Eigenvalue = 3.75). The four items measuring the effectiveness of the rights normative strategy load highly onto the second factor (Eigenvalue = 3.59). The third factor captures four items measuring the power informational strategy clearly (Eigenvalue = 2.89). The fourth factor captures the degree to which participants perceived the interests informational strategy as effective (Eigenvalue = 2.51). However, this strategy can only be assessed using three of the anticipated four items because the first item loads onto a different factor and was therefore excluded from further analysis. The reliability of the interests informational strategy was increased by excluding the mentioned item. The fifth factor captures three of the four anticipated items measuring the rights informational strategy (Eigenvalue = 2.15). The first item assessing the rights informational strategy had a factor loading below .1 and was excluded from further analysis. By doing this the reliability of this strategy was increased. Three of the anticipated four items measuring the effectiveness of the interests normative strategy mostly load onto the sixth factor (Eigenvalue = 1.71); one however, with low factor loading. The fourth item that was intended to measure the interests normative strategy had a factor loading below .1 onto the sixth factor and was excluded from further analysis. This exclusion increased the reliability of the interests normative strategy.

To sum it up, the factor structure of the six social influence strategies is generally supported by 21 items and each social influence strategy has a satisfactory reliability (see Table 2 in Appendix B also for the factor loading of each item).

A cross-cultural response bias was detected in which the Dutch participants systematically perceive all social influence types as more effective than the German participants do. In order to prevent this bias from distorting the results of this study, group mean centering was used to standardize the data. According to Fischer (2004) this means of standardization is appropriate for the given situation.

Manipulation check

A manipulation check was included in this study to ensure that the participants understood the vignette scenario correctly. As depicted in Table 3 (see Appendix B), seven open-ended questions were used for this purpose. Example questions are 'What is the name of the company that you work for?' or 'Is your peer reviewer your superior or your colleague?'. Participants who answered the question of 'Is your peer reviewer your superior or your colleague?' incorrectly were removed from the sample in order to prevent nuisance. A total of 5 participants had to be removed from the sample (1 German and 4 Dutch participants). In addition, 25 participants were removed due to an unfitting cultural background or cultural orientation (3 from the German sample; 22 from the Dutch sample) and 39 participants because of incomplete data (30 from the German sample; 9 from the Dutch sample). Other than that, the percentages of correct answers for the rest of the manipulation check indicate that the participants from both samples understood the scenario sufficiently correctly. This manipulation check also stresses the cultural priming and enhances awareness of the relationship with the second reviewer.

Descriptive statistics

Table 4 (see Appendix B) depicts the group centered means and standard errors for Germany and the Netherlands regarding the different influence strategies as well as the correlations between the different variables.

The results of the correlation analysis in Table 4 show that there are positive and significant correlations between the six different social influence types. For example, in the German sample the interests informational and interests normative strategies correlate with Spearman's $\rho = .627$, $p < .01$. These correlations suggest that the measures for the social influence types might overlap.

Hypothesis testing

In the following section the testing of several hypotheses is described. Between subjects analyses are used to assess the main effect hypotheses as well as the moderation hypotheses. For significant moderator effects, a contrast test is executed to further specify the effects of authority on the different social influence strategies. For all the analyses, a

significance level of .05 is assumed. The results of these between subject analyses for all hypotheses are summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. *Between subjects analyses of the hypotheses, depicting the main effects of authority and culture and the interaction effects of both.*

	II	IN	RI	RN	PI	PN
Authority	18.112**	18.887**	.929	4.222*	8.148**	1.414
Culture	.086	.379	.179	.013	.022	.014
Culture*Authority	3.020	39.081**	3.532	5.339*	15.190**	17.709**

Note. The abbreviations stand for: Interests informational (II), interests normative (IN), rights informational (RI), rights normative (RN), power informational (PI), power normative (PN).

*. F-value is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**. F-value is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The first hypotheses propose that authority has a main effect on the perceived effectiveness of the power normative strategy (1a), the power informational strategy (2a), the rights normative strategy (3a) and the interests normative strategy (4a). The results support a main effect for the power informational strategy ($F(1, 90) = 8.15, p = .005$), the rights normative strategy ($F(1, 90) = 4.22, p = .043$) and the interests normative strategy ($F(1, 90) = 18.887, p = .000$). The means in Table 6 (see Appendix B) indicate that each strategy was perceived as more effective, when it was used by a superior than when it was used by colleague. Hypotheses 2a, 3a and 4a could therefore be confirmed.

However, no significant main effect of authority on the power normative strategy was found ($F(1, 90) = 1.41, p = ns$). Hypothesis 1a could not be confirmed. Still, the means of the perceived effectiveness of the power normative strategy (see Table 6 in Appendix B) suggest that this strategy is indeed perceived as more effective in the high authority condition than in the low authority condition.

Hypothesis 1b proposes that the influence of authority on the perceived effectiveness of the power normative strategy is stronger for the Germans than for the Dutch. The results confirm this hypothesis with $F(1, 90) = 17.709, p = .000$. In Figure 1, the results of the contrast test are depicted which show that the Germans significantly perceive power normative arguments as more effective when spoken by a superior than when spoken by a colleague ($t(93) = 3.649, p = .000$), while the opposite is true for the Dutch. The Dutch

participants significantly perceive these arguments as more effective when spoken by a colleague than when spoken by a superior ($t(93) = -2.132, p = .036$).

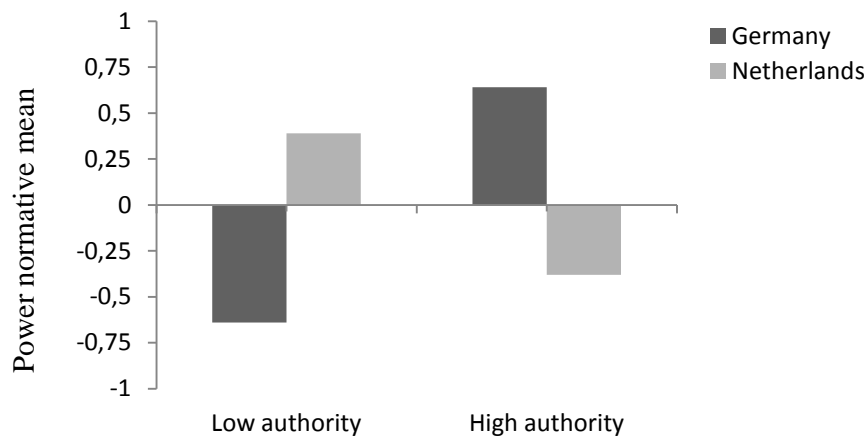


Figure 1. Bar graph depicting results of the contrast test of the interaction between culture and authority regarding the power normative strategy.

Hypothesis 2b states that the Germans are stronger influenced by authority in their perceived effectiveness of the power informational strategy than the Dutch. This hypothesis is confirmed with $F(1, 90) = 15.190, p = .000$. As the contrast test in Figure 2 shows, German participants significantly perceive the power informational strategy as more effective when a superior is the persuading party than when a colleague persuades ($t(93) = 4.308, p = .000$). For the Dutch participants, the contrast test is not significant with $t(93) = -.692, p = ns$. However, the bar graph slightly depicts a pattern opposite to the Germans.

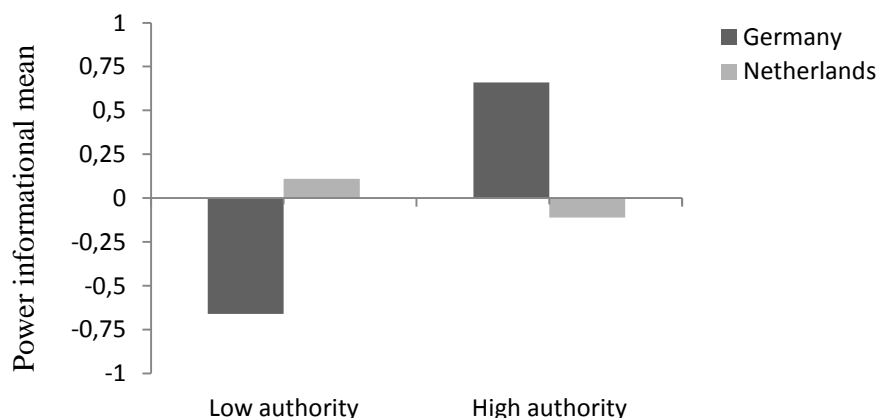


Figure 2. Bar graph depicting the results of the contrast test of the interaction between culture and authority regarding the power informational strategy.

Hypothesis 3b assumes that the influence of authority on the perceived effectiveness of the rights normative strategy is stronger for the Germans than for the Dutch. This

hypothesis is confirmed with $F(1, 90) = 5.339, p = .023$. The contrast test in Figure 3 shows that the German participants significantly perceive the rights normative strategy as more effective when a superior is the persuading party than when a colleague persuades ($t(93) = 2.775, p = .007$). For the Dutch participants, the contrast test is not significant with $t(93) = -.142, p = ns$. However, the bar graph slightly depicts a pattern opposite to the Germans.

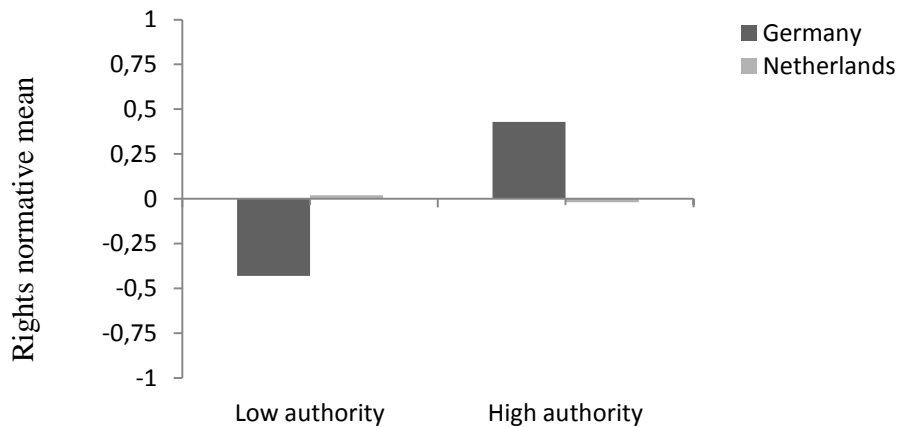


Figure 3. Bar graph depicting the results of the contrast test of the interaction between culture and authority regarding the rights normative strategy.

Hypothesis 4b proposes that the Germans are stronger influenced by authority in their perceived effectiveness of the interests normative strategy than the Dutch and can be confirmed with $F(1, 89) = 39.081, p = .000$. The contrast test in Figure 4 shows that the Germans significantly perceive the interests normative strategy as more effective when it is used by a superior than by a colleague ($t(93) = 7.618, p = .000$). For the Dutch participants, the contrast test is not significant with $t(93) = -1.430, p = ns$. However, the bar graph slightly depicts a pattern opposite to the Germans.

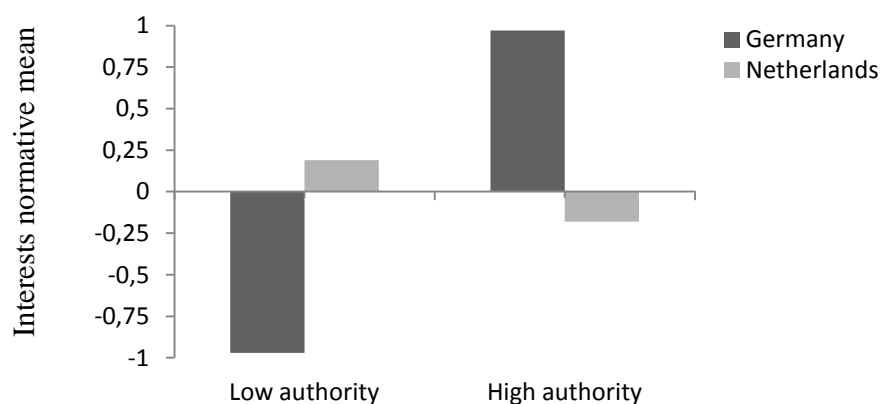


Figure 4. Bar graph depicting the results of the contrast test of the interaction between culture and authority regarding the interests normative strategy.

Additional analyses

In addition to the hypotheses, the results show that no significant main effect of culture on the perceived effectiveness for both, the interests informational strategy ($F(1, 90) = .086, p = ns$) and the rights informational strategy was found ($F(1, 89) = .179, p = ns$). In addition, for both, the interests informational and rights informational strategy, no significant interaction effect of authority and culture was found, with $F(1, 90) = 3.020, p = ns$ for the interests informational strategy and $F(1, 89) = 3.532, p = ns$ for the rights informational strategy.

Discussion

Literature has identified many different negotiation and influence strategies which can be used in order to solve negotiations with a beneficial outcome (Nowotny, 2005). In addition, several contextual factors have been found to influence negotiations and therefore the effectiveness of the used strategies (Pruitt & Carnevale, 2003; Adair, et al., 2001). The purpose of the current study is to test the effectiveness of six newly derived persuasive strategies and to assess the role of authority differences between the disputants and of culture in this regard. Three major findings were made.

First, the prediction of the current study that the three ways of resolving a dispute by Ury et al. (1988) and the two types of conformity – informational and normative influence – (Gerrig & Zimbardo, 2008) can be combined, is supported by the data. As expected, the six different types of social influence strategies yield new means of solving disputes effectively. The factor analysis revealed a clear factor structure regarding each strategy (see Table 2 Appendix B). This finding implies for that the different theories combined in this study can and should be combined. With Phouthonephackdy's study (2011) in mind who also found sufficient support for the combination of these theories, the first steps of deriving a sophisticated new model of conflict resolution have been made. However, these newly derived six social influence strategies can and should not only be used theoretically but can also be utilized in real-life conflict situations, especially at work. Using simple cues in a negotiation the other party in a dispute can be effectively influenced.

The second major finding is the expected significant effect of authority on the persuasive strategies. Certain strategies, namely the power informational, the rights normative and the interests normative strategy, were perceived as more effective when used

by a superior than when used by a colleague. Even though this tendency was also found to be correct for the power normative strategy, no significant main effect of authority on this strategy could be confirmed. A possible explanation for this insignificance might be the group mean centering approach used to remove the cross-cultural response bias. Fischer (2004) proposes that this method of removing a bias might also reduce real cultural differences. Still, these findings support Kabanoff's (1991) statement that the influence attempts of the powerful party in a negotiation are more effective than those of the powerless party, especially when considering the strategies involving power-based and normative based aspects in order to be persuasive. For theoretical matters, these findings imply that, in addition to authority (and culture), other contextual factors might also be influential. Further analyses using different contextual factors should be conducted in order to further explore these persuasive strategies. For practical matters, these findings imply that a person should try to gain authority when negotiating in order to benefit from the negotiation.

The third important finding in this study is the significant moderation effect of culture. The results indicate that the German participants perceived the power normative, power informational, rights normative and interests normative strategy clearly and significantly as more effective when used by a superior than when used by a colleague. In contrast, the Dutch participants significantly perceive the power normative strategy as more effective when it is used by a colleague than when it is used by a superior. The same pattern is reinforced for the other strategies, however not as strongly and insignificantly. Bond and Smith (1996) support this finding by stating that the acceptance of social influences is to some degree a product of culture. Overall, the Germans are influenced more strongly by authority than the Dutch. An explanation for this finding could be the Germans' hierarchical orientation (Tomalin, 2003) and the egalitarianism of the Dutch (Harris, et al., 2004). According to Brett and Okumura (1998) the cultural value hierarchy versus egalitarianism implies how power is perceived by a culture. Hierarchical cultures prefer differentiated social status and people with a lower status are expected to concede to high-status members, whereas in egalitarian cultures status differences exist but status does not automatically convey negotiation power. These findings have clear theoretical implications. As suggested by Carnevale and Leung (2001) a great number of studies in the field of culture and negotiation have been conducted focusing on Hofstede's dimension individualism-collectivism. However, the current study shows that cultural differences strongly exist regarding the perception of authority and hierarchy. It can therefore be suggested that

differences in this regard should be involved in cross-cultural studies more often. For practical matters, based on these findings it can be suggested that the social influence strategies (especially the power informational, rights normative and interests normative strategy) are more effective when used in a conflict with an unequally powerful disputants and when the powerless person has a German cultural background. When the other disputing party in a negotiation has a Dutch cultural background, authority does not support the persuading party. It even seems to hinder the persuasion process when the authority differences between the parties are thoroughly stressed, like in the power normative strategy.

Further theoretical implications can be drawn from the findings in this study. For example, the social influence strategies from this study might also contribute to the understanding of conflict resolution in other domains than workplace conflicts. New ideas might be derived from this study for crisis negotiations, especially in multicultural crisis situations which naturally involve authority differences. In addition, further clear practical implications can be delineated. Due to the fact that the social influence strategies are concerned with both the actor and the target of the persuasive message, something can be learned about the behavior of both disputing parties. This study gives sufficient information in how to use the strategies as an actor in the negotiation. Simple cues used by the actor in a negotiation influence the other party effectively. For example, when using the rights normative strategy to influence the other party, the actor provides company rules or standards in order to persuade the other party. The current study also explains how a person is influenced as a target. When the actor in a negotiation uses company rules to persuade (thus the rights normative strategy), the target perceives these rules as a legitimate reason for accepting the opinion of the actor because these standards clearly show that the actor is right and correct in his opinion. Accordingly the current study adds value not only theoretically but also in a practical way. The findings indicate that the powerful party generally is a more successful actor, especially when the actor is dealing with a target with a German cultural background.

Limitations

A major limitation of this study is the presence of the cross-cultural response bias. The Dutch systematically perceived every single one of the six social influence strategies as more effective than the Germans did. A group mean centering approach was used to prevent this nuisance from distorting the findings. However, literature suggests that this method can

also reduce real cultural differences between the countries (Fischer, 2004). Still, not using the group mean centering approach is not an option because then the bias would distort the findings and also their interpretations.

Initially, 169 participants filled in the questionnaire, but the data of only 97 participants was used in this study. The fact that most participants had to be removed from the sample because they filled in the questionnaire incompletely indicates that the questionnaire was too long.

In addition, for some participants it was unclear whether they were responding to a superior or a colleague in the scenario. Even though these participants were identified by means of the manipulation check and could easily be removed from the sample, this misunderstanding poses a shortcoming and needs to be taken care of in replications of this study.

Future studies

Future studies which assess the perceived effectiveness of social influence strategies, the main effect of authority and the moderation effect of culture in this regard, should try make use of the identified limitations in this study and improve these shortcomings. One way of ensuring that the participants correctly understood the scenario is to prime the participants for the authority condition. It is possible to include a word-search puzzle in which the participant has to search words like superiority, authority, power and control in the high authority condition and words, such as friendship, colleague, and equality in the low authority condition.

In this study a student sample was used as a source of acquiring data. However, the purpose of this study is to assess the perceived effectiveness of social influences strategies in a workplace dispute situation. Therefore, further studies in this regard should use employees as a sample. Such a sample fits the purpose of this study better.

Conclusion

According to Boe (2009) a person's success is determined by that person's ability to persuade others. This is not only true for a person's working life but also in other aspects of life. The current study contributes in a similar vein. It outlines and tests new means of influencing and persuading other people with simple arguments increasing a person's persuasive power and making that person more successful in dealing with others. The

arguments reflecting the six different social influence types can easily be applied in everyday life situations by including certain clues in one's arguments. However, this study also indicates that not every type of social influence is equally effective. Cultural aspects and the relationship with other party need to be taken into consideration when applying the strategies. It is necessary to keep in mind that the findings here can only be seen as general guides but not as specific recipes. Literature suggests that no one single approach can be assigned to a specific culture (LeBaron, 2003) and people often use more than one specific method to influence others (Ury et al., 1988).

In a nutshell, this research contributes new ideas to the theories, constructs and research questions on the field of negotiation research but still, a lot of research is needed to validate and generalize the findings.

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Appendices


Appendix A: Parts of the questionnaire

The German version of the flyer

Beeinflussungsstrategien: So bekommst du was du willst
Mach mit bei meiner Studie um heraus zu finden, wie du Menschen effektiv
beeinflussen kannst
(Dauert ungefähr 45-60 Minuten)

off the mark .com by Mark Parisi

HERE WE GO... "HOW TO WIN
FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE..."



Online via
www.studentenforschung.de/web/?id=191100

Oder
www.studentenforschung.de/web/?id=191677

Hier kannst du **2 Knokarten** gewinnen! (Chance 1 zu 50)

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The German cultural prime



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Appendix B: Data-analysis

Table 2. *Depicts each item and its factor loading as well as the Cronbach's alpha values of the six social influence strategies*

Strategy	Items	α	Factor loading
II	I know you want to avoid risk, and the reason for this peer review process is to have a second reviewer catch the pitfalls that you, as the first reviewer, might miss.	.782	.359
	I hear you are concerned with accuracy, so I went ahead and gathered sales performance data and benchmarks before suggesting these changes.		.776
	I compiled data on the partner's activities and performed analysis on how many dolls the partner can sell, because I know you are under a lot of pressure to negotiate a good deal.		.813
IN	I am aware this deal can really help your career, so I made sure I researched the partner's sales performance over the past 2 years.	.716	.734
	Your department has a record of high performance, and these changes will bring the company more money, allowing you to maintain your department's status and to increase your own promotion chances.		.413
	I know you must be concerned with the partner's reaction and your own promotion, but senior management is asking that we increase our partner's initial commitment.		.504
RI	I agree it will be a challenge to keep the partner happy and increase the company's profits at the same time, so if you can do this the senior management will appreciate it.	.622	.833
	I know you want to avoid mistakes to promote your own career; therefore you should apply the company's best practice.		< .1
	Company's past experience has shown us that if we make our distributors commit to buying more products, then they will sell more.		< .1
RN	I collected information on the partner's sales activities in the last year and they will be able to sell 200,000 dolls.	.878	.732
	In order to meet our sales goal in the first year, if we are selling at 5 € per doll then the partner should buy at least 200,000 dolls.		.762
	Based on best practices, our shipping team delivers dolls in multiples of 100,000. We should adjust the partner's commitment to reduce shipping costs.		.442
PI	The industry standard is to sell in multiples of 200,000 dolls. We need to remind our partner of this standard.	.842	.830
	Prior contracts have required an initial commitment of 200,000.		.806
	Our company's standard is an initial commitment of at least 200,000. That is the standard set for our business transactions.		.849
PI	I am requesting these changes to ensure this business deal complies with the guidelines set out by the company.		.763
	I closed 6 deals this year. This is your first.		.723

	Based on <u>my</u> 15 years of experience with this type of work, I am sure the changes should be made.		.622
	As a supervisor, I have a tremendous amount of expertise in this area including a Masters degree in Risk Management. The changes should be made.		.727
	I have negotiated dozens of deals involving sales quotas and I know that increasing this partner's sales quota to 200,000 dolls would give us a better deal.		.561
PN	The Senior Vice-Presidents demand the changes be made.	.874	.762
	Disagreeing with your company's Senior Vice President is not a wise thing to do.		.759
	You will not get ahead in this industry if you are not aggressive. An initial commitment of 150,000 is not aggressive enough.		.759
	If you make a mistake, it will hurt your credibility with senior management.		.689

Table 3. Shows the manipulation check and percentages of correct answers for both samples.

Questions	Percentage of correct answers	
	German sample	Dutch sample
What is the name of the company that you work for?	100 %	97.9 %
Where is your company headquarters located?	100 %	97.8 %
What department do you work in?	100 %	97.9 %
What is the contract under consideration for?	95.8 %	91.5 %
How many units does the distributor want per year?	95.9 %	85.1 %
How many units does your reviewer want you to include in the contract?	91.8 %	87.2 %
Is your peer reviewer your superior or your colleague?	100 %	100 %

Table 4. Depicts the group centered means and standard errors for the different influence strategies as well as correlations of both Germany and the Netherlands.

		Mean	SE	II	IN	RI	RN	PI	PN
Germany	II	-.027	.159						
	IN	.061	.142	.627**					
	RI	.033	.156	.267	.394**				
	RN	.003	.172	.133	.371**	.324*			
	PI	-.004	.168	.435**	.536**	.282*	.417**		
	PN	-.013	.195	.287*	.542**	.283*	.554**	.602**	
Netherlands	II	.045	.161						
	IN	-.075	.145	.214					
	RI	-.069	.158	.340*	.474**				
	RN	.034	.176	.373**	.309*	.527**			
	PI	.035	.172	.420**	.584**	.429**	.247		
	PN	.023	.200	.247	.612**	.322*	.376**	.586**	

Note. The abbreviations stand for: Standard error (SE), rights informational (RI), interests normative (IN), power informational (PI), rights normative (RN), interests informational (II) power normative (PN)

*. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

Table 6. *Depicting the group centered means and standard errors of Germany and the Netherlands for each strategy from both authority conditions as well as the total means of each strategy per authority condition.*

	Low authority						High authority					
	Germany		Netherlands		Total		Germany		Netherlands		Total	
	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE	Mean	SE
II	-.658	.813	-.279	1.132	-.473	.989	.632	1.039	.268	1.060	.453	1.055
IN	-.967	.742	.191	.735	-.412	.936	.967	.939	-.183	1.115	.403	1.172
RI	-.274	.774	.108	1.063	-.087	.937	.263	1.171	-.103	.900	.083	1.053
RN	-.430	1.071	.023	1.176	-.213	1.134	.430	1.040	-.022	1.098	.209	1.082
PI	-.660	.781	.112	1.047	-.290	.988	.660	1.268	-.107	1.176	.284	1.271
PN	-.635	.818	.391	1.084	-.143	1.077	.635	1.544	-.375	1.347	.141	1.523

Note. The abbreviations stand for: Standard error (SE), rights informational (RI), interests normative (IN), power informational (PI), rights normative (RN), interests informational (II) power normative (PN)